

Murrumburrah Writers' Group

Newsletter



'Tears are words that are meant to be written,' says author Paulo Coelho. To me this is a startling revelation for most of us have shed many tears, yet these haven't been transposed into writing, so **it's time for all of us to get cracking!**

According to most writers the way to reach your writing goals is to practice, practice and practice even more. The Writers' Group is here to guide you although, the practice part is up to you! Already members have written two books, a musical and our play (a collective exercise) is moving towards completion. I believe this is outstanding for a group that has only been in operation for two years and one of those years we did not meet due to COVID. Congratulations everyone!

As those of you in the **play writing group** know, gifted Director, **Rob Proven will be attending** the Play Writers' meeting next Thursday, so **please make a point of coming.**



IMPORTANT:

Please **bring along any ideas** that you wish to write about and if your interest is family history, please don't forget to bring along the details that you already know about your family!

And if there's **any outstanding work** due for the 'play' group please bring it along.

Above all **don't forget your writing materials.**

OUR NEXT MEETING

This coming THURSDAY,

April 22 at 6pm until 8pm

at the **Murrumburrah Court House,**

Cnr. Vernon & Albury Sts, **MURRUMBURRAH.**

If you wish, **please bring a dish to share,**
TEA & COFFEE ARE SUPPLIED



MEMBERSHIP AND ENTRY FEE

(which covers electricity plus other expenses) is:

\$2's members,

\$4's non-members,

Membership is \$10's per year.

If you'd like more information or need transport and/or wish to let us know you'd like to attend:

Please call Robin on 02 6386 2100.

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Professional Writer Under Focus:

Each month we focus on the career paths of authors/writers of any genre, and each will offer tips on how to progress your writing career.

THIS MONTH our focus is on young American author, **JH BUNTING** who has stellar career and also in detail shares some of his hard-earned knowledge

"I was going to die there, I was sure, sixty feet below Paris in a tunnel named after a street I couldn't pronounce the name of; steps from the bones of six million dead, lost at the crossroads of three tunnels. I had no idea where I was or what I was going to do."

Thus, starts American author JH (Joseph Harold) Bunting's latest novel entitled: Crowd Sourcing Paris.

Joseph decided to decamp from his home in Georgia with his wife Talia and three sons in tow and to write his next novel in Paris. However, he was \$600's short of the funds he desperately needed so 12 of his followers decided to donate towards 12 adventures they chose for him to write whilst living in Paris.

He took up the challenge which led him to heaps of curious adventures and in one, he almost lost his life when a tunnel collapsed. The adventures were exciting to say the least. He managed to produce a book that didn't quite meet the superlative reviews of previous work such as "Hands" which is about a dying musician who chances upon his favourite student and then discovers that he can only connect again through the music he wrote.

This can happen to any author, especially when the subject matter is so diverse. Despite this Joe has shown himself to be an exciting author. During his career Joe

has been quite diverse. For instance, he has been a Wall Street best-selling ghost-writer, he writes on the topic of how to write, he has a blog, has written business books, is a fully fledged writer and much more.

Since Joe was 14 years old he had been chasing what he calls 'awe'. It started when he realized that there was this **thing** that happened to him', on occasion, when he would start crying.

He wasn't sad, he wasn't in pain. It was something else, and as embarrassing as it was for a young male to cry it also felt good, that's when he realized he was experiencing 'awe'.

"To me 'awe' is this emotional and spiritual realization that life is both wonderful and dreadful as well as overwhelmingly good and it's because of this feeling that I decided to become a writer!"



Author: JH Bunting

Joe began his career writing songs, "I remember this one moment when I was performing a song I had written. In the middle of it without warning I was crying. He then noticed that he wasn't the only one, others in the audience were crying too. It was amazing! At that moment I thought that 'awe' was something I could give my life to.

When he switched from song writing to prose writing, he began learning as much as he could about writing. In high school he took writing classes, in college he majored in creative writing, he got a job at a local magazine after college, he blogged, he wrote books, he started teaching, he created the blog, The Write Practice.

"I needed to learn the craft of writing so I could convey the feeling of 'awe'. This took him almost 20 years however he still learning!

Fortunately, his audience grew, by small amounts at first, and then by huge jumps. This year, The Write Practice, (a blog that teaches people how to write) is about to reach 5 million people. His book, '14 Prompts', has been read by more than 100,000 people.

Recently Joe realized that he had spent so much time focusing on the craft that he'd forgotten about the

feeling of 'awe' he wanted to convey and also to write in the way he had always intended.

Joe believes that every writer experiences tension between their craft and their core message, as well as the tension between the marketplace and their art.

He believes that he had focused too much on trying to impress people, to make people think he was a good writer who knew what he was talking about so that they would listen to him, however he forgotten what the craft was for. It wasn't supposed to be about impressing people. It was supposed to be about passing along this 'awe' that he had decided to dedicate his writing career to.

Joe says that he always returns to a quote from Robert McKee, the famous instructor of The Story workshops: *'When talented people write badly, it's generally for one of two reasons: either they're blinded by an idea they feel compelled to prove or they're driven by an emotion they must express. When talented people write well, it is generally for this reason: they're moved by a desire to touch the audience'*.

Joseph believes that each author needs to ask what his/her core message is? What feeling he/she trying to share with an audience, so they can be touched by your writing just as you have been touched by the subject you decided to write about?

Book of the Month:

Here forthwith is the **BOOK OF THE MONTH**, which is available on-line. In addition, another book has been selected that will assist you with your writing.



This month's choice is:

Hands

By acclaimed writer:

JH Bunting.

'Hands' has received many superlative reviews, so I'll allow the reviews speak for the book.

"Joe Bunting is the first young writer to truly impress me in years. Read him now, so that you can brag about it later when he's at the top of the New York Times best seller list!"-- **Cynthia Dagnal-Myron, Author and Journalist.**

"The author succeeds in writing a deep, thought-provoking piece filled with metaphors and interesting life scenarios."-- **Barbara Mojica, Amazon Top Reviewers.**

"This short story is genius. Evocative, stunning prose. I

don't know how I came across this author, but I am so glad I did. More stories like this, please! Until there are more, I'm going to reread HANDS. Right now."--

Loves2Read

"This short story reads like jazz sounds...loud, then soft and smooth, like the story of life in song. It mourns. It jiggles. It spikes high and winds down softly. Brilliant. Loved it. Play another one, Joe Bunting."

-- Amazon Reviewers.

This month's 'writers assist' choice is:

How to Win a Writing Contest.

By Author:

Joe Bunting



If you thought that winning a writing competition was for the gifted or the lucky – you're wrong. Joe Bunting has devised a formula that will comfortably help you to sit in the winner's seat.

Writers' Group Support:

Most writers think they are born with whatever talent they have and they're not going to get much better. Most writers believe if you're not a genius writer, you'll **never** be one. They believe if you're not a **good** writer, you'll never become a good writer.

They believe that we are limited, basically, to whatever talent we were born with. According to author **JOE BUNTING** who started The Write Practice, **that's simply not true.** He says everyone can become a great writer; everyone has something important they have to share with the world and everyone can grow through practice and what's equally important everyone who wishes to, can get published.

ORIGINAL STORIES, ARE THEY A MUST?

By: Joe Bunting

Have you ever heard that there are no original stories? Although the idea that there are no original stories may sound disappointing, especially for writers, the truth is that most stories follow a formula that conforms to the "same, but different."

I believe it's a good thing! If stories were completely original, it would be hard to know if there was a readership interested in them. We want stories that are unique, but that also follow the same conventions and tropes of certain types of stories that we've read or seen before. The truth is that stories, *good* stories, usually function on formulas.

Not all stories follow a formula, however it has been proven that most of the ones that grow popular or withstand the test of time tend to. In essence Readers don't want a completely new story. Without realizing it they want the same story told in a whole new way.

I didn't fully, in fact I didn't embrace this lesson until I wrote, *Headspace*.

At its core, *Headspace* is a story about an ordinary person who is forced into a competition in an extraordinary setting.

Does that sound familiar? It should because it's the same formula followed by *The Hunger Games*, *Ready Player One*, cult classic *Battle Royale*, and a number of YA and science fiction novels.

I struggled with this hugely as I put the book on paper, wondering if I am a fraud and copycat for simply coming up with this story. However, it is a story I believed in and it demanded to be written, so I forged ahead.

As I wrote, I realized something important: the more I wrote, the more organic the story became.

It grew its own way and differed greatly from books that follow the same formula.

Though the concept is the same, every one of these books are different, and loved in their own right. My story, as it turns out, is different as well.

My characters do not follow the path of others in similar situations, and my book does not walk a paved path but rather finds its own. My story may not be original, but it is *unique*.

More importantly—at least I like to believe—it's *good*.

But what exactly does it mean to be *unique* if not original? Let's take a look.

The "Unoriginal" Original

There are a number of studies on plot types and many people differ on exactly how to categorize plot. However, one thing remains the same, experienced writers recognize that the majority of stories fall into a small handful of types.

Rather than go into detailed examples in this article, I want to point out some easily recognizable examples to help you recognize that nothing is *truly* original.

A hero is sent on a journey to complete a quest

A hero has set out on a long journey to complete a quest or obtain a prize that is far away. They meet and join up with unlikely companions who help them along the way or turn out to be enemies.

What story is this?

Perhaps it's *The Lord of the Rings*. That's the obvious answer.

But maybe it's *Indiana Jones*?

Or how about *'Watership Down'*?

If we want to go back even further, maybe it's *The Odyssey*?

Is it possible that every hero on a quest since *Odyssey* has just been a retelling of the same formula? As you'll see it is!

An ordinary hero is sent on an adventure

An ordinary, slightly annoyed guy is dragged onto an unwilling adventure by eccentric acquaintances.

Ok, that's definitely *The Hobbit*, right? Wait, maybe the old favourite, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*?

Or the TV show *Sherlock*. It could even be *Green Eggs and Ham*!

Different Stories, Same Formula as a 'Good Strategy'

Are these stories too similar to be interesting? Or have you found each one unique and enjoyable on its own?

Has it even occurred to you that they share the same core formula?

Here's an even more blatant example.

Two people meet. Two people fall in love. Two people run into trouble they conquer. Two people live happily ever after.

What does this sound like?

Perhaps every romance novel ever written, plus every story with a romantic subplot?

I don't see the romance industry shrinking any time soon. In fact, there are more love stories written every year and the people love them just the same.

Old Idea, New Twist: 3 Ways to Make Your Story the Same, But Different

You may now ask, "How do I distinguish myself if every story out there has been told a hundred different times?" Is it even worth writing your story if everyone else out there has already told it?

Yes! Everyone else has told this story, but *you* haven't.

How you tell this story will be different from everyone else, see? The world needs the version *you* want to tell, too.

Here are three easy ways to make an old formula into a new story.

1. Fresh Perspective

A story told from a different perspective becomes a new story entirely. This means a new POV, we want to hear from your narrators in a fresh way!

Every set of eyes in a story looks at its events differently.

For example, a superhero story told from the point of view of the sidekick is completely different from the hero's point of view.

A love story seen from the eyes of the rival love interest is a new story entirely.

Take a traditional story and tell it from someone you wouldn't expect to hear from, and suddenly you have a tale never told before.

2. Unexpected Twist

When reading a book with a proven formula, readers tend to expect a certain order of events:

- Cinderella marries the Prince.
- The quest for the holy grail ends in obtaining the treasure.
- The case is solved and the murderer found.

However, if you change just one of the expected elements, it turns the story on its head.

Perhaps Cinderella never wanted the prince to begin with. Maybe instead she's conspiring with her sisters to burgle the palace.

Maybe the murderer everyone thought was guilty was actually innocent and it was the detective who set up the whole thing.

Have you ever considered that treasure at the end of the journey isn't a treasure at all, but a curse that must be given to someone and the unwitting hero has now become a sacrifice?



3. Combine Formulas

When you find it difficult to find uniqueness within one formula, sometimes it's best to take a few and combine! No one said you have to stick to one.

The best way to approach this is to select one formula and add elements of others, otherwise your story could feel unfocused.

A comedy with a few touching tragic scenes, for example, or an adventure story that also leads to the protagonist discovering something unexpected about themselves can easily lead to a more complex and unique story.

Whatever you combine, it will be a unique way *you* tell the same story. It will be your own original unoriginal way of telling it.

The World Is Full of Unoriginal Stories

Don't confuse "original" with good. And even more so, don't confuse "unoriginal" with bad.

You do not have to be original to be unique.

There is someone out there waiting to hear your version of an age-old story, that only you can tell. It's important to recognize that formulas work for a reason and once you learn them, you can use them in a way that is completely and utterly, you.

And if you're stuck, if you're afraid that your story is *too* similar, turn to your writing community for some honest feedback.

Murrumburrah Writers' Groups Aims:



The Murrumburrah Writers Group logo

The Murrumburrah Writers Group aims to expand writer's abilities as well as their skills, while focusing on encouraging the love of writing plus endorsing professional writing practice. In alliance with you our Writers Group will endeavour to foster an energetic, inventive, as well as a supportive writing family. Where possible it's the group's intention to guide writers towards publication (if you haven't already published) and also to work towards finding writing opportunities for writers.

Our group is suitable for keen writers of fiction and non-fiction, of most genre, who wish to build their writing plus presentation skills and who're prepared to offer constructive support to other writers.

Introducing Our Team:

The 'Murrumburrah Writers' Group' team is a volunteer board dedicated to using their skills to help grow a thriving arena for those interested in developing their writing.



MANAGING DIRECTOR/EDITOR

Robin Cooper - 02 6386 2100, 0408 021 026

Robin is an experienced arts curator who ran gatherings for those interested in the performing as well as the visual arts.

With a background in journalism Robin's interests are in writing, film, literature, art, in fact most arenas covering the arts. She also has experience in all aspects of running her own businesses as well as in events management.

In addition she liaises with members, develops activities, and in general keeps the 'group' ticking.



CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Pam Heys - 6386 4789

Pam has a background in teaching, she has lived in China and is an award-winning artist. Pam has travelled extensively and has lived in Fiji and China. She brings her wide-range of professional skills to our team.



PHOTOGRAPHIC DIRECTOR

Diane Murphy - 0439 785 687

Diane is an avid photographer who enjoys creating photographic compositions for her own use. Diane, held a managerial position within the Club industry for a number of decades. Her interests include writing, photography, reading and art.



FINANCIAL DIRECTOR

Greg Medway - 0487 028 657

Greg has been a successful businessman for more than 35 years. He has just had his first book published which is about 'how to develop a viable business in China'. So far it's received much acclaim from businessmen and academics. Greg's hobbies are writing, poetry and sport.



MEMBERS/GRANTS/PROJECTS DIRECTOR

John McAvoy 0439 785 687

John held a number of positions in the Public Service and although retired, he's currently working with a team of 25 on a ground breaking scientific programme that's developing technology which aims to grow a permanent home within three or so days. If successful this technology will be ideal for third world countries and disasters zones where emergency housing is required. John has always held a great interest in literature and wishes to advance this interest by developing his writing skills.



ALTERNATIVE DIRECTOR

Lena Elphick - 0401 600 301

Lena has studied Visual Art and has a BA, Post Grad Professional Art Studies and a Diploma of Education (Art). She has written two books, one about local soldiers and the other involves her husband Gordon's family history tree.

Membership Form:

If you wish to become a member of our group, please fill in the following form and/or contact Robin on 02 6386 2100

MURRUMBURRAH WRITERS' GROUP

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

(A MEMBER OF THE HARDEN MURRUMBURRAH ARTS COUNCIL)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER: _____

BUSINESS PHONE NUMBER: _____

MOBILE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

HOBBIES: _____

WHAT INTERESTS YOU MOST ABOUT WRITING: _____

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE OUR GROUP TO HELP WITH YOUR WRITING AIMS? _____

SIGNATURE: _____

One year's membership:

\$10.00

OR

If you are **already a member of the Harden Murrumburrah Arts Council** (ie belong to another group

within the Arts Council) One Year's membership for the MWG is:

\$ 5.00